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CITY COUNCIL

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CITY MANAGER

September 30, 2013

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Public Lands and
Environmental Regulation
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1017 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Public Lands and
Environmental Regulation
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1017 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the city of Las Vegas, I write to whole-heartedly support the *Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2013* (S.974/H.R. 2015). We worked closely with the Nevada Congressional Delegation to designate the Tule Springs area as a National Monument in the 112th Congress, and we look forward to moving the bill forward in this Congress.

As you may know, this legislation enjoys broad support in Southern Nevada and would result in many mutually beneficial outcomes. The city of Las Vegas supports swift passage of S.974/H.R.2015 as it is imperative to protect paleontological and sensitive plant resources. We also believe that the legislation would create opportunities for economic development and job creation while providing for responsible urban development of adjacent lands, and allowing for necessary infrastructure to service existing developed areas.

Again, we strongly support S.974/H.R.2015 and look forward to its successful passage.

Respectfully,

Steven Ross
City Councilman, City of Las Vegas, Nevada
Ward 6

C: Chairman Doc Hastings, U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
Ranking Member Peter DeFazio, U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
U.S. Senator Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senator Dean Heller
U.S. Congressman Joe Heck
U.S. Congressman Mark Amodei
U.S. Congresswoman Dina Titus
U.S. Congressman Steven Horsford

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- ORAL COMMENTS-

City Councilman Steve Ross

Thursday, October 3, 2013, 10:00 am

1324 Longworth House Office Building, Room 1324

- Good Morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Steve Ross, City Councilman for the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, representing Council Ward 6
- I am here to support the Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2013. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about this important bill for our Southern Nevada Community. It's an honor to testify before two committee members from the state of Nevada, Congressman Mark Amodei and Congressman Steven Horsford.
- There are three key points I will make: 1) This bill has broad community support; 2) it will create jobs; and 3) conserve important resources.
- First, Broad Community Support. It is rare that an elected public official has the privilege of working on legislation that is being actively supported by all sectors of a community. In particular, there is active support from NV Energy, Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, elementary and high school educators, area colleges and universities, including the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Public Lands Institute, and environmental and conservation groups. Representatives from these organizations, among others, are working closely with a group of concerned citizens and have developed public support for this bill.
- The Board of Clark County Commissioners, the Las Vegas City Council, the North Las Vegas City Council, the Nevada State Legislature, and the Tribal Council of the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe unanimously passed resolutions urging Congress to pass legislation creating a national monument. With your permission, I would like to submit their letters of support for the record.
- Second, Job Creation. One of the reasons this bill has such committed support is because it creates opportunities for economic development and job creation while providing for responsible urban development of adjacent lands, and allowing for necessary infrastructure to service existing developed areas. It would attract national and international visitors from a wide range of interests including educational, scientific, cultural and natural resources.

- I'd like to draw your attention to Section 5. This provision, known as the "Las Vegas Job Creation Zone" will transfer land from the Bureau of Land Management to the City of Las Vegas to be made available for private development through competitive auction. The proceeds of the sale will stay with the federal government. This transfer of land from federal control to private ownership will facilitate important economic goals for the City of Las Vegas by making surplus federal land available for commercial development in accordance with local land use plans. The City expects the release of lands will create thousands of jobs over the next decade. This surplus land, supported by urban infrastructure and amenities, is ideally situated to provide development opportunities for businesses supporting Creech and Nellis Air Force Bases.
- Third, Conserve Important Resources. The site is one of the most significant fossil bed sites in North America depicting life in the Ice Age. Fossils from prehistoric camels, mammoths, giant sloths, lions and other animals and plants have been unearthed at this site. Thousands of Pleistocene (Ply-Stuh-Seen) era fossils have been found in Tule Springs, and thousands remain for scientific excavation, examination and public viewing. Fossils and fossilized pollen in the area span nearly 200,000 years of time, offering important insight into at least two Ice Ages and multiple warming and cooling periods.
- I have visited this site on a number of occasions, and personally seen tusks bigger than me that came from Ice Age Columbian mammoths. This site should be set aside so others can visit and learn from these resources. Tule Springs has allowed faculty from UNLV and other academic institutions to get students practical paleontological and geological experience. The site provides excellent educational opportunities within close proximity to a large city for local students, visiting school groups and the general public. This is a unique situation for most fossil locations.
- For these reasons: Broad community support, job creation, and conserving important resources, I am honored to be here to ask you to support passage of the Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2013.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to be here. I would be happy to answer any questions.



July 9, 2012

The Honorable Mark Amodei, U.S. Congressman
125 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Amodei:

We are writing to express our support for H.R. 6072, the Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2012. We believe this legislation reflects a well-balanced approach to public land management policy in the northern part of the valley, and we urge you to cosponsor this important measure.

The legislation facilitates important economic development goals for the Cities by making surplus federal land available for commercial development in accordance with local land use plans. The Cities expect the release of these lands to create thousands of jobs over the next decade.

The legislation would achieve important conservation goals by establishing the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. Located at the northern edge of the Las Vegas Valley and within the boundaries of the Cities of North Las Vegas and Las Vegas (the "Cities") are the Tule Springs National Register Historic Site and an area known as the Upper Las Vegas Wash, a unique natural drainage channel that carries storm water from the surrounding mountains toward Lake Mead. Found within these areas are significant paleontological sites containing numerous fossils demonstrative of the Pleistocene Ice Age that span geologic history from 7,000 to nearly 200,000 years ago. These areas also contain endangered and imperiled plants such as the Merriam's and Las Vegas Bearpoppy and the Las Vegas Buckwheat, as well as important habitat for threatened species such as the desert tortoise and burrowing owls.

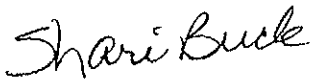
Recognizing the significance of these areas, the Mayors and City Councils of the Cities unanimously passed a resolution, in collaboration with the Clark County Commission and the Tribal Council of the Southern Nevada Paiute Tribe, requesting that Congress designate the area surrounding Tule Springs and the Upper Las Vegas Wash a unit of the National Park Service. We believe a national monument is the appropriate designation.

Mark Amodei
U. S. Congressman
July 9, 2012
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Due to the large number and variety of resources that are available for study and viewing within the area it is expected that the national monument would attract visitors from all over the world with a wide range of interests, including educational, scientific, cultural and recreational. The Cities have worked closely over the last four years with the Nevada Congressional Delegation and a broad range of stakeholders, including the U.S. Air Force, conservation groups, and NV Energy, to develop a boundary for the national monument that balances conservation and resource protection with the future growth needs of the Cities.

The Cities appreciate all you do for Southern Nevada, and we urge you to cosponsor this important public lands legislation for the benefit of current and future generations of Las Vegas Valley residents and visitors.

Sincerely,



Shari Buck
Mayor
City of North Las Vegas



Carolyn G. Goodman
Mayor
City of Las Vegas

C: City Council of the City of North Las Vegas
City Council of the City of Las Vegas
The Honorable Harry Reid, U. S. Senator
The Honorable Dean Heller, U. S. Senator
The Honorable Shelley Berkley, U.S. Congresswoman



March 28, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

The Cities of North Las Vegas and Las Vegas, in collaboration with NV Energy, have met to discuss the creation of a unit of the National Park Service in the area surrounding the Upper Las Vegas Wash. All parties are in complete agreement on 1) the need for legislation to make the area surrounding Tule Springs and the Upper Las Vegas Wash a unit of the National Park Service, and 2) that there is a proposal for a transmission corridor across the northern part of the valley linking NV Energy's Northwest Substation and the Harry Allen Generating Station, and legislation should accommodate a transmission/utilities corridor that would adhere to all applicable local, state and federal regulations.

Legislation making these unique and significant areas a unit of the National Park Service will result in mutually beneficial outcomes, including:

- Protect paleontological and sensitive plant resources,
- Create opportunities for economic development and job creation by attracting national and international visitors from a wide range of interests including educational, scientific, cultural and natural resources,
- Provide for responsible and orderly urban development of adjacent lands,
- Allow for necessary infrastructure to service existing developed areas and future development

Senator Harry Reid

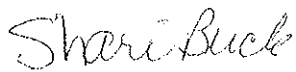
March 28, 2011

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We would like to lend our support to moving forward with legislation designating the area a unit of the National Park Service.

Thank you for your continued support of this important project.

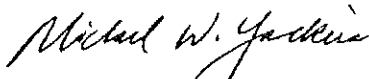
Sincerely,



Shari L. Buck
Mayor
City of North Las Vegas



Oscar B. Goodman
Mayor
City of Las Vegas



Michael W. Yackira
President and Chief Executive Officer
NV Energy

C: The Honorable John Ensign
 The Honorable Shelley Berkley
 The Honorable Dean Heller
 The Honorable Joe Heck



December 21, 2011

To the editor:

Earlier this month, more than 100 economists, including three Nobel Laureates, signed a letter to President Barack Obama urging federal support to establish new protected areas such as national parks, wilderness areas and national monuments, particularly in the western part of the United States. Their reason: these projects have a substantial impact on economic growth and job creation.

In southern Nevada, we have reaped tremendous economic and quality of life benefits from federally protected lands. Imagine how much benefit our residents and visitors get out of such public wonderlands as Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Red Rock Conservation Area, and Mount Charleston and Lee Canyon in the Toiyabe Forest. We have another national treasure that has the same potential to be a major local and national attraction – the proposed Tule Springs National Monument that encompasses the length of the entire northern section of the Las Vegas Wash.

Not only is this site filled with potential recreational benefit, but this section of the Las Vegas Wash is also internationally recognized as one of the most significant fossil bed sites in North America depicting life in the Ice Age, a period covering more than 200,000 years of climate change and biological adaptation. Fossils from prehistoric camels, woolly mammoths, giant sloths, lions and other animals have been unearthed at the site, along with fossils representing an abundance of marine and plant life.

Recently, 1,500 members of the Vertebrate Paleontological Society held their annual meeting in Las Vegas precisely because of its proximity to this incredible site. As reported in the Review-Journal, one participant neatly summed up the need for the area's protection: "It's a world-class fossil site. You can actually see how ecosystems have transitioned from warm climates to cold climates and back again through several ice ages."

As the elected leaders of our respective local and tribal governmental entities, we are urging our Congressional Delegation to come together and act quickly to establish this National Monument and to provide the resources to turn it into a world class visitor site. The economic and quality of life benefits are tremendous.

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As the economists' letter points out: "Today, one of the competitive strengths of the West is the unique combination of wide-open spaces, scenic vistas and recreational opportunities alongside vibrant, growing communities that are connected to larger markets via the Internet, highways and commercial air service. Increasingly, entrepreneurs are basing their business location decisions on the quality of life in an area. Businesses are recruiting talented employees by promoting access to beautiful, nearby public lands. This is happening in western cities and rural areas alike."

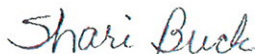
By protecting and creating recreational opportunities in our canyons, rivers, deserts and mountains, we also establish a unique and compelling environment that plays a pivotal role in attracting and retaining people and businesses. Public lands, such as the proposed Tule Springs National Monument, support activities like hunting, fishing and hiking that improve our quality of life, attracting visitors and supporting economic growth.

We encourage Senator Reid, Senator Heller, Congresswoman Berkley, Congressman Heck and Congressman Amodei to join together and move for swift action. We have a golden opportunity to do something today that will have immediate impact and that will positively affect generations to come.

Sincerely,



Carolyn G. Goodman
Mayor
City of Las Vegas



Shari L. Buck
Mayor
City of North Las Vegas



Tonia Means
Chairperson
Las Vegas Paiute Tribe



November 19, 2010

Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2803

Dear Senator Reid:


As you are aware, the Mayors and City Councils of the Cities of North Las Vegas and Las Vegas unanimously passed a resolution, in collaboration with the Clark County Commission, and the Tribal Council of the Southern Nevada Paiute tribe, requesting that Congress make the area surrounding Tule Springs and the Upper Las Vegas Wash a unit of the National Park Service, with a land management designation that is appropriate for the protection of the resources and that would be managed by the National Park Service.

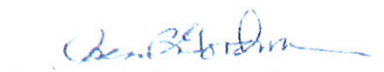
Due to the large number and variety of resources that are available for study and viewing within the area it is expected that the proposed National Park Service unit would attract visitors from a wide range of interests including educational, scientific, cultural and natural resources, and it is anticipated that visitors will be attracted from a broad geographical area; from local to international.

The Cities have, and continue to work diligently with all interested parties, including NV Energy, and are confident that resolution of all outstanding issues in regard to proposed legislation will be achieved in the near future.

The Cities look forward to the legislation that will make these unique and significant areas a unit of the National Park Service. We thank you for your support and appeal to you to advance the legislation that will ultimately establish this national park monument.

Sincerely,


Honorable Shari L. Buck
Mayor
City of North Las Vegas


Honorable Oscar B. Goodman
Mayor
City of Las Vegas

Attachments

cc: City Council of the City of North Las Vegas
City Council of the City of Las Vegas
Honorable Senator John Ensign
Honorable Congresswoman Shelley Berkley
Honorable Congressman Dean Heller
Honorable Congresswoman Dina Titus

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 1—Assemblyman Aizley

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION—Expressing the support of the Nevada Legislature for the designation of the Upper Las Vegas Wash as a national monument.

WHEREAS, The Upper Las Vegas Wash contains thousands of Pleistocene mammal fossils of national importance, including Columbian mammoth, ground sloth, American lion, camel and horse fossils; and

WHEREAS, Since 1933, the Upper Las Vegas Wash has been valued by scientists because of the significant paleontological fossils demonstrative of the Pleistocene epoch, commonly referred to as the Ice Age, that are located in the area; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, during the preparation of the Las Vegas Valley Disposal Boundary Final Environmental Impact Statement, the Bureau of Land Management identified sensitive biological, cultural and paleontological resources determined to be worthy of more evaluation with respect to the protective status of the resources; and

WHEREAS, The harsh desert environment of the Upper Las Vegas Wash supports unique and imperiled plants, including the Las Vegas buckwheat, Merriam's bearpoppy, Las Vegas bearpoppy, the halfring milkvetch, Joshua trees and several species of cacti; and

WHEREAS, The Upper Las Vegas Wash provides important habitat for the threatened desert tortoise, endemic poppy bees, kit foxes, burrowing owls and a variety of reptiles; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, a National Park Service reconnaissance survey of the area determined that the area likely contains the largest continuous section of Pleistocene strata in the desert southwest; and

WHEREAS, The Upper Las Vegas Wash is significant to the culture and history of the native and indigenous people of the area, including the Southern Paiute Tribe; and

WHEREAS, Despite the findings and recommendations of the aforementioned Environmental Impact Statement and reconnaissance survey, the Upper Las Vegas Wash remains inadequately protected; and

WHEREAS, Many irreplaceable fossil specimens in the Upper Las Vegas Wash have been lost to vandalism or theft; and

WHEREAS, Designation of the Upper Las Vegas Wash site as a national monument would protect the unique resources of the area for present and future generations while allowing for public



education and continued scientific research opportunities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the 77th Session of the Nevada Legislature hereby recognize that the Upper Las Vegas Wash contains unique, nationally important biological, cultural and paleontological resources; and be it further

RESOLVED, That to conserve, protect, interpret and enhance for the benefit of present and future generations these unique and nationally important resources, the Nevada Legislature expresses its support for the designation of the Upper Las Vegas Wash site as a national monument; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, each member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation, the Governor and the Director of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and to the Director of the Department of Wildlife for distribution to the various conservation groups that have participated in the effort to designate the Upper Las Vegas Wash site as a national monument; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.

